



CONNECT | GROW | SERVE

The Serve Experience

Here's some great ways to serve as a *Growth Group* in our community.

If none of these resonate, we'd be happy to help you brainstorm!

- Stephane Harvey, stephanie@crossroadsgrace.org
- Shawn Luis, shawn@crossroadsgrace.org
- Pastor Jim, jim@crossroadsgrace.org

Fall Season Specific Ideas

- Volunteer at Trunk-or-Treat
- Provide a Thanksgiving Meal
- Give a family a Christmas
- Help lead a Christmas service at a Nursing Home

Non-Seasonal Ideas:

Appreciate a Non-Profit

Provide a welcome appreciation event for a hard-working non-profit team.

How about arranging a meal, coffee or ice cream social for its key staff and volunteers?

Meal for a Family at a Shelter

A meal can be a welcome encouragement for families in transition.

There are three shelters in town. You could arrange for a pizza meal at Hope Family Shelter (do a dinner on the playground area with a family), or at Building Hope Transitional House (prepare a meal with a family in their kitchen). Ask how they got

where they are, what their thoughts are living at a "shelter," how their children are processing it, what they are thinking about their future, how they can be prayed for. Appreciate them and pray with them.

- Shawn Luis can help you with this and she can be reached at shawn@crossroadsgrace.org, 209.629.0243.

Visit Manteca Sikh Temple

Experience a completely different culture and begin to appreciate differences. At the Manteca Sikh Temple, you can have a Sunday lunch time visit to meet and share a meal with people from the Manteca area at their place of worship. Visit and you will be offered a complimentary lunch (and it is great food). Ask honest questions to seek to understand some who we live alongside, shop with, and involve our children with in school and sports. We can probably arrange an interpreter to be with you, or we can ask God to supply someone

that day. This is out-of-the-box for some, but right-in-the-pocket for an amazing local experience.

- Pastor Jim has a different sheet that explains this more fully and he can be reached at jim@crossroadsgrace.org, 209.484.8734.

Manteca Homeless Task Force

Experience a new approach to how to help homeless.

With the Manteca Homeless Task Force in a Thursday morning ride-along with them as they interact with individuals and families (noticing how things go down, how hard it can be, and offering what help is possible). If you are able to treat a couple people of the Task Force to lunch or coffee, ask questions about how they got into the role, what they enjoy or struggle with along the way, how they persevere.

- Doug Montandon is part of the Homeless Task Force, and he can be reached at douglas@loveincmanteca.org, 925.580.6398.

Mobile Fresh Food Distribution

Serve the needy with dignity by providing them with much needed food.

At the Crossroads parking lot on a 1st and 3rd Friday mornings of each month, serve alongside Mobile Fresh, a part of the Second Harvest Food Bank, distributing fresh groceries to people in a line. This must be a humbling experience ... but serving folks in dignity and respect, you will find people are so appreciative. Afterwards, have your team debrief what was going through your minds and hearts?

- Rudy Valencia oversees Mobile Fresh, and he can be reached at rvalencia@secondharvest.org.

Mobile Homeless Shower

Provide a practical way to help homeless feel love.

At a spot around town on a Thursday noontime, help with the Mobile Shower Unit for area homeless where you would help people fill out simple paperwork, give undergarments and towels, a haircut or lunch, and have at least a couple people ask "how can we help you off the streets? If you have time to sit among folks over lunch, seek to hear their stories and how they are doing.

- Shawn Luis oversees the Mobile Shower Unit and she can be reached at shawn@crossroadsgrace.org, 209.629.0243.
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60 Ways to Reach Out

These practical suggestions can help your group minister to "the least of these."

By The River Church Community

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me'" (Matthew 25:34–36).

10 Ways to Feed the Hungry

When it comes to feeding those who are hungry, there's no need for you or your group to wait for more education or information. This is something you can do now, and an easy way to make a real difference in someone's life today.

1. Carry fast food coupons or grocery store certificates in your wallet to give to those you encounter who ask for help.
2. Order an extra coffee, bagel, or hamburger so you can share it on your way out.
3. Encourage a person in need to call the Food Connection at 1-800-984-3663 and find a nearby agency that will serve them healthy food with dignity. If possible, you make the call and then lead the person to the food provider's door.
4. To truly understand the challenges of the hungry, organize your small group for an extended fast. Support each other and share your experiences, while praying for others coping with hunger. Get the book [God's Chosen Fast](#), by Arthur Wallis, for guidance on safe, appropriate fasting that pleases God.
5. Encourage each member in your group to visit [The Hunger Site](#) every day. Each click on this site generates a cup of food for hungry people in third-world countries.

6. Sign up for an afternoon to sort, deliver, or serve food with one of the many organizations that serve the hungry. Your group could even try to build up to a weekly commitment or organize a collection effort in your workplace or school to get others involved with you.
7. Donate to [American's Second Harvest](#), or use their [Food Bank Locator](#) to find an opportunity for your group to volunteer.
8. Sign on to <http://www.fh.org> for the international Christian-based organization Food for the Hungry. Sign up for an advocacy kit and learn about ways to get active on the global scale. Read and respond to current prayer requests.
9. Encourage your company or business to join [Second Helpings](#), a Food Bank program that dispatches trucks to retrieve food at cafeterias, unsold during the day, to serve at soup kitchens and homeless shelters in the evening. Call 1-800-870-3663 to sign up.
10. Add extra nutritional staples to your shopping list and make a weekly donation to a local agency serving the poor.

10 Ways to Help the Thirsty

The solutions for getting water to the thirsty are proven and simple: wells, purification, irrigation, and training. The infrastructure to help is available, and the solutions are relatively inexpensive.

1. Go to <http://www.watermagazine.com> for a very fast education about the global water situation. This exhaustive resource covers every imaginable aspect with links to the World Health Organization and other respected sources.
2. If you're within striking distance of a water-poor area, consider going on a short-term compassion trip as a group to dig wells and train maintenance volunteers.
3. Donate online to global efforts. Some of the more successful efforts include christianchildrensfund.org, which has a designated water fund; globalwater.org; and waterforchildrenafrica.org.
4. Support efforts like World Vision that teach modern farming techniques, which prevent over-harvesting and stripping—two major causes of evaporating water sources.
5. Research and support a Denver-based company called [Healing Waters International](#). This company works to build self-sustaining projects that allow local churches to provide cheap, clean water to those who need it.
6. Help spread awareness by sharing your research findings and passion with other people in your life. Often, people only need to be encouraged or motivated by a friend, and then they'll get involved, too.
7. Contact the organization you decide to support and find out how you can lobby at home on its behalf. You can write your congressperson and your U.S. Senators. Get to know their aides who specialize in the well-being of developing nations.

8. Be a "silent" partner. If you're unable to travel or provide financial assistance, you can faithfully use the power of prayer to help a community find water solutions so it can be healthy and prosperous. Research places in need by using the resources in this list. Track your adopted location if you can, and watch to see what God does.
9. Teach children to value water. Discover together how conservation is a gift you can give to all of society, and learn more at the [U.S. Geological Survey's kids' site](#).
10. As a small group, research the stewardship issues surrounding bottled water. Consider transitioning to tap or filtered water as a cheaper and less wasteful alternative.

10 Ways to Help Strangers

Whether through your time, your financial resources, or both, your small group can discover many ways to welcome the strangers in your community. Use this list to set your imagination in motion and put your hands into action.

1. Join the conspiracy. Learn how by reading [The Conspiracy of Kindness](#), by Steve Sjogren. This is a refreshing and new approach to sharing the love of Jesus with others in practical ways. You'll be inspired by the simple acts—like mowing a lawn—that you can do to touch the soul of a stranger. Work together as a group, and even get other groups to conspire with you.
2. Learn a new language, like Spanish. Having another way to communicate will make you that much more accessible for God's purposes.
3. Visit a senior citizens' center and help with social activities, or make regular visits to a senior home. Giving a routine dose of hugs or smiles will help you a lot, as well.
4. Teach English as a second language (ESL) classes. Dozens of local agencies provide this vital service, and you can start researching at the [English as a Second Language](#) website.
5. Staff a crisis line for battered women. It's not difficult for members of your group to become screened, trained, and assigned to a regular shift. For more information, see the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#).
6. Help a homeless person find emergency shelter. You can find shelters in your area by using the [Yahoo! index](#) of homeless shelters.
7. Consider a deeper investment into the lives of strangers by mentoring adults and children with developmental disabilities. You can find out more through [The Mentor Network](#).
8. Individually or as a group, practice random acts of kindness with the people you come in contact with every day. Learn more, and get practical suggestions, through the [Random Acts of Kindness Foundation](#).
9. Use the collected gifts of your group members by joining forces for regular service projects benefiting the members of your community.

10. Learn the power of small things done with great love by practicing servant evangelism. Find out more at ServantEvangelism.com.

10 Ways to Clothe Others

With a little extra care and planning, you can leverage your clothing donations to make a big impact. Your consideration will genuinely touch the people and agencies you serve.

1. Clean out your closet at the beginning of a season so your donations can get the most use.
2. Save volunteers the sweat of making your donated clothes presentable. Make sure your clothes are clean, pressed, on hangers, and in overall good condition. Only donate clothes you would still consider wearing yourself—especially if you're contributing career clothing.
3. Though a clean closet might feel like a real accomplishment, the work has just begun. Understand how your donation will be used. For instance, when you donate to Goodwill, your clothes are sold in stores to raise funds for job training and placement for the disabled and others with special needs, rather than given away for free to the needy.
4. Make a special effort to acquire and donate men's suits and work clothes. These are especially needed for men between jobs or in transition from shelters or prison. In general, far fewer men's clothes are donated than women's.
5. Organize friends, co-workers, or other small groups to assemble back-to-school backpacks with supplies for children in shelters, or in other family agencies.
6. Some people leave their homes in emergencies and need the basics for comfort and warmth. Consider donating coats, blankets, sheets, pillows, sleeping bags, towels, and small-sized toiletries.
7. Donate store gift certificates for Payless, Wal-Mart, or other smart shopping spots so individuals can pick out brand new clothes and shoes that appeal to their tastes.
8. If you want to help disaster, war, or fire victims, make a cash donation to the American Red Cross or Salvation Army. That way, the agencies can relay your support to the most urgent need without the added burden of warehousing, sorting and distributing massive donations.
9. So, you don't have any clothes to give away? Pitch in to organize the contributions of others. Offer your time on a Saturday morning to help an agency listed in this section. Sort and display clothing so it's ready for clients during the week.
10. When you go to a big sale, buy lots of new undershirts, underwear, and socks to donate with your other items.

10 Ways to Care for the Sick

While taking care of the sick, it's important to keep yourself healthy. Some illnesses are contagious, while others require so much support that they drain your reserves and leave you prone to a different attack. Either way, one of the best things you can do for the people you're helping is to keep yourself well.

1. If a friend or relative is sick, has had a baby or even a routine surgery, send a card, make a phone call or pay a visit. The personal touch really helps.
2. Offer to drive the sick person to and from appointments—especially daily cancer treatments or inpatient procedures.
3. Donate blood! It's not as gruesome as it sounds. Consult with American Red Cross or your hospital of choice to find a program you can support.
4. Sign-up to make regular visits to a local hospital to deliver books, magazines, and smiles. You can even rotate these visits between group members.
5. Give practical and emotional support to people with AIDS, and support the continuing efforts to find a cure at aids.gov.
6. Make a home-cooked meal and deliver the food in convenient disposable containers available at grocery stores.
7. Be proactive—learn first aid. Sign up for CPR classes and other emergency assistance programs, or volunteer to teach others.
8. Get outdoors and help with recreation and therapeutic programs for physically and mentally disabled children and adults.
9. If you have single or elderly friends under the weather, special TLC like bringing chicken noodle soup or renting a movie to watch with them will go a long way to take the loneliness out of being sick.
10. Donate time, financial resources, or prayer support to the [Global Health Access Program](#)—an organization providing medicine and care for communities in crisis around the globe.

10 Ways to Help Prisoners

Prisoners live in a state of crisis. They are helpless to help their families, and they are stripped of their influences and resources to even help themselves. Consider these ways you can ease the burden of someone who has made a wrong turn and now pays the price—or help prevent the wrong turn before it's even made.

1. Serve prisoners by joining or starting a church-affiliated effort to lead Bible studies for inmates. These work best through teams that offer guidance and encouragement.
2. God has a lot to say about crime and justice. In your small group, use a Bible with a concordance to look up sections about punishment and forgiveness. What are your thoughts?
3. Four out of five people in prison today grew up with a close relative who also served time in prison. Learn about ways to minister to the children of inmates through Awana Clubs International's [Returning Hearts](#) program.
4. Use the education and training resources of the Prison Fellowship Ministry, founded by Chuck Colson. Visit the Web site at www.pfm.org to learn Biblical teachings about prison and how to sign up for special classes.

5. Support local substance abuse rehabilitation services with your time and financial help.
6. Support [Koinonia House National Ministries](#)—a non-profit organization that ministers to Christians coming out of prison through the Meet Me at the Gate program.
7. Prison sentences separate families. Help keep them together by donating Greyhound bus vouchers through [Friends Outside](#).
8. Amnesty International won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 for its work to protect the rights of political and other prisoners, including those in the United States. Visit their [USA website](#) to learn about Amnesty's campaign in this country and see if there's a role for you.
9. Research pro bono legal assistance for ways to connect people in need of legal assistance with those who can help. Start your education at [ProBono.net](#).
10. Consider providing support and encouragement for an inmate through the [Inmate Pen Pal Connection](#).

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Other sites with ideas:

(External sites - we are not responsible for content)

[75 Community Service Ideas](#)

[Community Service Ideas for Small Groups](#)

[Service Project Ideas - Kiwanis](#)